

Shee layeth her Hand to the Spindle and
her hands hold the distaffe: Pro: 31. 19.



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SOME
PROPOSALS

For the imployment of the

POOR,

AND

For the prevention of Idleness and the Con-
sequence thereof,

Begging. *Z. 11. 6*

A Practice so dishonourable to the Nation,
and to the *Christian Religion*.



In a Letter to a Friend by T. F.

*For even when we were with you, this we commanded, that if any
would not work, neither should they eat, 2 Thes. 3. 10.*

*Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour, working
with his hands, the thing that is good, that he may have to give to
him that needeth, Eph. 4. 28.*

L O N D O N,

Printed by J. Grover, and are to be sold by Francis Smith, at
the Elephant and Castle, and Brab. Aylmer, at the Three

Pigeons in Cornhill. 1681.

1783.15

*Some Proposals for the Employment of the Poor,
and for the Prevention of Idleness, &c.*

S I R,

IT is now above four years since I erected my Work-House in *Little Britain* for the Employment of the Poor in the Linnen Manufacture, which hath proved so great a Help, and afforded such Relief to many Hundreds of poor Families, that I never did, nor I fear ever shall do an Action more to my own satisfaction, nor to the good and benefit of the Poor.

In a former *Letter* that I wrote upon this occasion, I gave you some account of the management of the said Work-house, especially with relation to the Parish of *Aldersgate*; which *Letter* being wholly out of Print, and much desired by some persons, I shall here insert the chief things contained therein, with what else hath come into my thoughts concerning that matter; hoping that when the great benefit of such an Undertaking shall be made publick, every good man will some way or other give encouragement to it; there being nothing so necessary for the prevention of Poverty and the consequence thereof, Begging, as to provide some Employment for our Poor People, whereby to prevent Idleness, the Mother and Nurse of all Mischief, and one of those sins for which God destroyed *Sodom* with Fire and Brimstone from Heaven, as the Holy Scripture informs us.

To the end therefore that Poverty, together with that wicked Trade of Begging (which so many thousands of late years have taken up, to the dishonour of Almighty God, and the great scandal of the Government of this Nation) may be prevented, I shall humbly propose a few things, which being

put in practice, may with Gods Blessing, prove effectual to the ends designed.

And the first is this, That every Parish that abounds with Poor People, would set up a School in the nature of a Work-house, to teach their poor Children to work in, who for want thereof, now wander up and down the Parish and parts adjacent, and between Begging and Stealing, get a sorry living; but never bring any thing to their poor Parents, nor earn one Farthing towards their own maintenance, or good of the Nation.

This, in a short time, would be found very advantagious, not only to the poor Children themselves, who by this means, whilst young should be inured to labour, and taught to get their own Livings, but also to their Parents, who should hereby both be freed from the Charge of keeping them, and in time, be helpt by their Labours, as it is in other places; and moreover the Parish should be freed from much Charge which many times they are at, to keep such poor Children, or at least which they are necessitated to allow their Parents towards it.

Nothing being accounted a better Argument for a large Pension, than that a Man or Woman hath six or seven small Children, whereas unless they were all born at a time, or came faster into the World than ordinarily so many Children do, it is very hard if some of them are not able to work for themselves. I my self have at this time many poor Children, not above five or six years old, that can earn two pence a day, and others but a little older, three pence or four pence, by spinning Flax which will go very far towards the maintenance of any poor Child. Not that I would have these Schools confined only to Spinning, but left at liberty to take in any other work that the Children shall be capable of, as knitting of Stockings, winding of Silk, making of Lace or plain Work, or the like: For it matters not so much what you employ these poor Children in, as that you do employ them in some thing, to prevent an idle, lazy kind of Life, which if once they get the habit of, they will hardly leave; but on the contrary, if
you

you train up a Child in the way that he should go, when he is old, he will not depart from it.

And this is the way (as I am informed) that is practiced in *Holland* and other places, with so great advantage, that there is very few Children who have attained to seven or eight years of age, that are any charge to their Parents, or burthen some to the Parish. And Mr. *Chamberlain* in his Book, Intituled, *The Present State of England*, hath observed, that in the City of *Normich*, it hath been computed of late years, and found, that yearly, Children from six to ten years old, have gained twelve thousand pounds a year more than they have spent, chiefly by knitting fine Jersey Stockings.

This School would be of no great Charge, but many ways advantageous to the Parish. At this time I have a person who for five shillings a week, doth constantly teach between twenty and thirty poor Children to spin; Some that are little, upon the single Wheel, and others that are bigger, upon the double, or two handed Wheel (like that which you have at the beginning of these Papers, which I esteem the best way for spinning, and full as proper for Wooll as Flax) which when they are expert in, I give the Children leave to carry away with them to their several places of abode, that so there may be room for others; and of these, there are divers that can earn six pence a day, and some more, allowing them two hours in a day to learn to read in, instead of that time which is allotted to the poorest of our Children to play in; a custom that I verily believe hath been the ruin of many thousand poor Children, and hath nothing in the World to justify it but an old Proverb, which yet we have not fully observed: For instead of giving them all work and no play, the generality of our poor Children have all play and no work, which is a thousand times more mischievous than the other. Not that I would have all manner of Recreation and Divertisement prohibited to Children, nor will it be hard to find some others besides playing at push-pin, or hide-Farthing, neither of which, nor twenty others now in use, are any ways conducing to the health of their Bodies, or to the improvement of their minds;
but

but are only fit to teach them lying and wrangling, with twenty cheating Tricks, which many times they retain as long as they live.

I believe there are very few persons who have had occasion to take one of these poor Children for a Foot-boy, or otherwise, but can tell you the sad Effects of such an idle Life as they have been brought up in; the Lad having from his Cradle, if he had any, been permitted to play, has made it so natural to him, that send him in what haste you will, upon any Errand, if he meets with a Play-fellow, will have a touch of his old Sport, and many times for want of such a one, will be exercising his hand alone, rather than forbear his old Trade.

Let any man that hath occasion either to walk or ride through the Out-parts of this City, (where mostly our poor people inhabit) tell but what he hath seen of the Rudeness of young Children, who for want of better Education and Employment, shall sometimes be found by whole Companies at play, where they shall wrangle and cheat one another, and upon the least Provocation, swear and fight for a Farthing, or else they shall be found whipping of Horses, by reason of which, they sometimes cast their Riders, to the hazard or loss of their Lives or Limbs; or else they shall be throwing of Dirt or Stones into Coaches, or at the Glasses, insomuch that I have been a hundred times greatly troubled, to see the Rudeness and Misbehaviour of the poorer sort of Children, (especially of late years) they having been generally so much neglected, that they have neither been taught their Duties either towards God or Man.

To me it seems very strange, that such Children whose Parents receive any Pension from the Parish, or that are brought up at the Charge of the several Parishes or in Hospitals, as soon as they come to six or seven years old, are not taught to do something towards their own Maintenance, which is the way in *Holland*, as hath been said. There the Children in Hospitals, as soon as they come to any Bigness, are two hours in a day, to wit, from Five to Seven in the Morning, taught to read and write; but when seven a Clock comes, they are by

by a Bell called to Breakfast, which when they have eaten, every one hath their several Employment allotted to them for all the day after, excepting only such time as they have to eat in. The Boys are sent to the Ship-yard to pick Okum, to turn the Wheel for the Rope-maker, to wind Quils for the Weaver, or to braid Nets, or the like: the Girls to Spin, to Knit, to weave Lace, or to work with the Needle, or some such like Employment as they are fit for; so that as I am informed, a thousand Children shall be brought up with less Charge in *Holland*, than five hundred here; and I cannot apprehend what Harm such a *Dutch Trick* would do us, if we had Wisdom enough to practice it.

If it be said that their Children are not maintained so well, nor learnt so much as generally our Children in Hospitals are;

I answer, 'Tis so much the better; for why should poor Children that must be put out to poor Trades, where they must work hard, and fare hardly, be fed with white Bread, or taught farther than is necessary for such Trades? Is not this to make them too big for their Business, which is always for the worse? Why, I pray must a poor Boy that is designed for a Mason, Bricklayer, Shoemaker, or the like honest and necessary Trade, be taught to write as if he were designed for a Master in that Art; or so far in Arithmetick, as if he were designed for a Merchant? Is it not enough that such Children are taught to read the Bible, and so much of Arithmetick and Writing, as may fit them for such Trades and Employments, as they are intended to be put unto? And must Children be kept from seven to fifteen Years old, to learn so much, when two hours in a day would be more than enough to effect it? And all the rest of their Time might be spent in doing something or other that might help to keep them, and be by degrees, inured to the Work and Business for which they are designed and intended. This in a very short time, however it may seem hard at first, would be much more pleasant to the Children themselves, than sitting eight or ten hours in a day under a severe School-Master, who many times shall whip a poor Child for not remembring or else for mistaking a few words;

words, as severely as a Rogue in *Bridewell*, for picking a Pocket or cutting a Purse.

I am well aware from some Discourses that I have met with of late, that what I have said in this particular, will give offence to some whom I am very unwilling to displease; And that they will object the great prejudice which will be done to some Children of good parts, if they should be hindered in their Learning, by the Advantage of which, if their Trades failed, they might be able to teach Arithmetick, or Writing, or to keep Merchants Accounts.

To which I answer, First, that there is no danger, that many Handy-craft Trades should fail: As long as People are born naked, there will be need of Shomakers, Taylors, Weavers, and such like; and as for those that may be able to teach Arithmetick, Writing, &c. there neither is, nor I believe, ever will be any want of such Persons, even among them, which received their Education from their Parents, and not upon Charity: Nay, I dare say, there is so many of these at present, that not one half of them can be provided for in these ways. Not but that if a poor Lad were found of extraordinary Parts, he might be permitted a more liberal Education; but the number of these is very few, and to give it unto others, is to do them and the Commonwealth a great prejudice. I myself have known some persons kept seven or eight years at School, to learn the *Latin* Tongue, which have stood them in very little stead afterwards, being gone from School they have soon lost it, and thereby all the time they spent to gain it; whereas, if they had instead thereof, been taught some useful Art or other, they might have been the better for it as long as they lived. It is very well known, that at this time, there is hardly Employment for one half of the Clergymen that are in *England*. Yea, some will tell you, that there are not above ten thousand Livings in *England*, and that there are above thirty thousand men in Orders to supply them. I am not bound to make good the truth of this Computation, but sure I am, that great Multitudes want Employment, and that

that if the smallest Living or Lecture shall be void, there will be many Competitors for it. Also, some will tell you, that the number of those that pretend to the Law of late years, are so much increas'd, that many of them (Thanks be to God) want Employment, although there are a sort of men in the Country (as I am informed) that make it their Business to set men together by the Ears, and ride from Market to Market upon but a very little better account, not but that I think and know there are many worthy men of that Profession, I heartily wish they were all such; 'tis only those that are guilty of encouraging Suits and Quarrels, that I am offended with, and if they are offended with me for saying thus much, I cannot now help it.

But not to forget the Objection, pray let it be considered before you ingage persons in a liberal Education, how they shall be maintained in it? and before you send Lads to *Cambridge* and *Oxford*, how they shall be kept there; if any man will be so kind to do it for a poor Boy, 'tis very well, and I for my part have nothing to say against it: otherwise, I am very sure, and know it by sad Experience, that for want of such Supplies, some have been sent to those places, that had better have stayed away, and been put to some honest Trade, by which they might have lived more comfortably themselves, and more profitably for the Nation: but at the Rate that some would order the matter, the Plough, the Sea, and Manufactory, which are the great Concerns of *England*, should be wholly neglected, as being too mean Employments for the poorest of our Children. He that hath a mind to see more of this, let him read *Britania Languens*, pag. 100. 102. &c. and pag. 133.

But that I may after so long a Digression return to the Business I was upon, to encourage the setting up of Schools for the Instruction of young Children, and bringing them to some Employment, whereby to get their own Living, the Charge hereof, as hath been said, would not be great, but the Advantages very many; and among others, this is not the least, That the Parents of such poor Children would have more

time to follow their Business and Employments, and that with more Content and Satisfaction, when their Children were not only kept out of Harms way, but were learning something that would do them some good at present, and more hereafter; all the Trouble they should have, being only in the Morning, to dress them with such poor Rags as they had to put upon them, and to give them some small matter for their Dinner, and to fetch them home at Night, if they were too small to go home alone: for at this School, I would have Children taken in from three to ten years old, those of the younger sort might be taught their Letters, and to read till they were able to Spin, or do some other work, and even then I would have two hours in a day at least, allotted to these poor Children, to learn some plain and uncontroverted Catechism, that might teach them the Principles of Religion, and also to perfect their Reading, which through the Blessing of God, might be a means to prevent much of that Ignorance and Wickedness that is found amongst our poor People, and bring them to Sobriety and Virtue, which being once done, they will of their own Accord, naturally fall to some honest Employment, without which, 'tis impossible they should continue good, or happily enjoy themselves.

That this is a way that would very much conduce to the Happiness of poor people, and their poor Children, I have found by very much Experience, having at this time several poor Children at my Work-house, that over and besides their learning to read, have learnt to spin both upon the single and double Wheel, and can earn from two pence to six pence a day, as hath been said; which, every *Saturday* Night, I cause to be paid to the Children, to carry home to their poor Parents, or else, cause to be laid out for themselves in such things as they need.

But before you enter the Child upon the double Wheel, or suffer it to spin with both hands, you must teach it to spin well with either hand upon the single Wheel, which is turned with the Foot as the other is, by means whereof, you may teach the Child to draw out the Flax with either hand indifferently,

ferently, and to be as nimble and quick with one hand as with the other ; otherwise, when it comes to spin upon the double Wheel, which hath a Quill for each hand, the Threads will not be alike, but one will be more twisted, and the other less; it may be, the one will be too much, and the other too little, and so will not do well together. In this School, are taught Boys as well as Girls, which they take very well unto; and for want of other Employment, they may be kept at, till they are fit to go to Prentice, or to do other Business; and the Girls, till they are fit to go to Service, and no longer: For it is a thing greatly complained of in the Country already, that by reason of so great numbers of Single Persons that of late are fallen to the Spinning Trade, and to live at their own Hands, there is so great a want of Servants, that it is very hard for the meaner sort to get a Supply, unless upon much higher terms than formerly; and the like would soon be here, if Single Persons that were come to any Age, were encouraged to live at their own Hands: For which reason, and some others, I have taken special care, that no person that is fit to go to Service, or to Prentice, shall have any of my Work.

From what hath been said in this particular, touching the great Benefit that would arise to every Parish, by setting up such a School for the Ends above specified, I would advise any person that had a mind to settle any thing upon a poor Parish, to appropriate it to some such use as this, rather than to give it at large to the Parish, to be disposed of at their pleasure: For this would be in effect, rather to ease the Rich, than to help the Poor, it being too well known, that several Parishes that have great Incomes for their Poor, have yet their Poor as ill provided for, as those that have less.

If therefore I had a 100 l. a Year to settle upon a poor Parish, I would do it after some such way as this:

Twenty pounds a Year I would appoint for an able and honest Woman, to teach forty of the poorest Children to read, and to spin Flax or Hemp, first upon the Single, and then upon the Double Wheel, which when they had well learned, they would be in a capacity to get their own Living.

Five pounds a year I would allot for the Rent of a Large Room to teach the Children in; Twenty five pounds a year I would assign for the buying of Hemp and Flax to teach the Children to spin upon.

Twenty five pounds a year I would allot for the payment of the poor Children that should spin the same, allowing one penny for every 600 yards of Yarn, which the Children should every week be paid for and carry home to their poor Parents, or else be laid out for them in such things as they needed.

Fifteen pounds a year I would allot for the Weaving of such Yarn, and whitening such Cloth as should be made of the Yarn.

Eight pounds a year I would allot for the buying such Wheels and Reels, as the poor Children should use; which, at their going out of the House I would have given unto them.

The remaining two pounds, I would appoint to be laid out for a Dinner for the Trustees, which should be upon a day prefixt, upon which day they should audite the Accounts for the Year past, and distribute the Cloth which was made, some of it to the poor Children that spun the Yarn, and the rest to other poor people in the Parish, especially the aged and impotent, it being more easy for them to get a Meals meat, to feed their hungry Bodies, than a Shirt to cover them; neither is the Charity much less to cloath the Naked, than to feed the Hungry; nor the Promise greater to the one than to the other. However, by such a deed of Charity, I should do both; and also by teaching the Children to read, and learn their Catechisms, you should instruct their minds, which is a piece of Charity no whit inferiour to the feeding their Bodies, or clothing their Backs: For without Knowledge, *Solomon* saith, *The Heart cannot be good*; and God by the Prophet complains, That his People perish for lack of Knowledge.

This Settlement I would so make, that it should not be in the Power of the Parish, nor yet of the Trustees to alienate to any other use or purpose whatsoever; but upon so doing, it should come to the Hospital of *Christ Church*, or some such like Foundation; the Governours whereof, would always take

take care that the Trnst were performed, or in case it was not would soon take it out of their hands.

Having thus proposed (as I conceive) a very likely way to prevent Idleness in the younger sort, my next Care must be to prevent it in those that are of Age, which I judge may be done by each Parish, if they would provide such Work for them, as they might carry to their own Homes, which though never so mean and homely, are more desirable than any other place, which also is the way that I have taken in the Parish aforesaid, and which is the way that all the Countries take for the Spinning of those vast Quantities of Yarn, which is every Year made use of, for the making of Bays, Sayes, Serges, and Stuffs of all sorts. And that which some of late have proposed of bringing them to a publick Work-house, will never effect the end desired; for suppose a Woman hath a sick Child, or Husband, or some Infirmary upon her self, in all which Cases, she may do something at home, but cannot leave her own House: and supposing that none of these should happen, which is yet very frequent, not one person of many, will endure the Thoughts of going to a publick Work-house. Sometimes it happens, nay, very frequently I have known, that Persons of good Education and well related, have fall'n into great Poverty, which for these Reasons, and lest they should fall into Contempt by the Discovery, they are willing to hide as much as they can, and therefore cannot expose themselves to work in a publick place. True indeed, for Vagrants and sturdy Beggars that have no Habitation, and that will not work unless they are held to it as Galley-slaves are tied to their Oars; such Work-houses are very necessary, and I wish we had more of them, and that those we have were employed to that purpose; but for such poor People as have Habitations of their own, and are known in the places where they live, and that would take Pains at home, it is altogether unreasonable and unprofitable in my poor Judgment to bring them to a publick Work-house.

Obj. But against this, of every Bodies carrying their Work to their own Houses, it will be objected, what Assurance can you

you have, that these poor People to whom you deliver your Flax and Hemp to spin, will bring it home again? They may die, and what will become of it then, or they may pawn it, or run away with it?

Ans. To all which I answer, that it is possible that one or all of these may happen as they have done sometimes among those that I have employed; but to prevent all Loss that may come by these ways, if the Persons be wholly unknown, which can hardly be if they live in the Parish, let them leave six pence in hand, which is about the Price of a pound of Hemp or Flax, which no poor Body who is of any good Behaviour, but will find Credit for, if they have it not of their own; and let this lie as a Pawn till they bring home their Work, and as long as you shall employ them, or be satisfied of their Honesty.

Obj. But some will object, that by this setting poor People to spin, you will take them off from other Employments, as winding of Silk, stitching of Bodice, knitting of Stockings, making of Lace or the like, which are more necessary Employments than spinning of Flax and Hemp to make Linnen Cloth, we having that already very cheap from other Countries, for which also his Majesty receives much Custom, which by this new Trade will wholly be lost.

Ans. To which I answer, That there is no fear that any Person who can wind Silk, knit Stockings, make Lace or the like, will leave these Employments, if they can have them, to spin Flax and Hemp, the Price thereof being so very low; but if any of these should fail, as many times they do (as for Instance, knitting of silk Stockings was of late years a very great Employment, whereas now they have found out a way to weave both Silk and Worsted: the knitting Trade is greatly abated, and 'tis like, in time will come to very little; had not then the poor People better spin than do nothing? And were it not much better that his Majesty should lose the Custom of some Linnen Cloth, than that the poor People should lose both their Bodies and Souls too in Sloath and Idleness, the latter whereof, is many times the Consequence of the former.

But

But as to the Custom of Cloth, it is humbly conceived, that if a higher Impost were laid upon Foreign Linnen, it would be a ready way to encourage this Manufacture at Home; and also bring in as much Money to His Majesty, though there should come in less Cloth than now there doth.

But further, let it be considered, that this Employment of Spinning Flax and Hemp, is set up, and intended only for those Persons that have nothing else to do, or that can do little else; of which number there are very many antient People, who cannot see to wind Silk, to stitch Bodice, or to work with a Needle, which yet can Spin indifferent well: Nay, there are some at this time which spin to me, that can see no more than the Wheels they spin upon, that yet follow this Employment, and can draw a Thread that for some purposes doth well enough; And for young Children, there is nothing they can more easily learn, than to spin Linnen, their Fingers being never so small, being big enough to pull out the Flax, and to make a fine Thread, in so much, that some Children that I have taken up, that came begging to my Door, which in six months time, have drawn a pound of Flax to so fine a Thread, that the Spinning hath come to twelve pence, which very rarely Antient People will draw to seven pence.

Obj. But again it will be objected, where will you find a Stock to employ so many poor People as shall want Work?

Ans. To which I answer, That there are few Parishes, but either have a Stock of Money, or so many good Men, that would willingly lend *gratis*, if not give considerably towards the carrying on of so good a work as is the Employment of the Poor: But in case either of these should fail, the Parish may as easily raise a Stock to set the Poor at Work, as raise Money by a Rate to keep them in Idleness. 'Tis very well known, that some Parishes about London, do raise some thousands of pounds every year for the Relief of their Poor; and yet as the matter is handled, very few who are not through Age or Sickness confined to their Houses, but do beg up and down the Streets: To prevent which, I know no better way, than to provide Work for all that are able; and instead of giving them

them twelve pence or two shillings in a Week, in dry Mo-
 ney, to give them the like value in Flax or Hemp, which,
 when they had spun, they should be paid for at the same rate,
 together with what the Spinning of it came unto. This in
 all probability would lessen the number of our Beggars and
 Street-walkers, who having not sufficient for the Supply of
 their Wants, allowed them by the Parish, make up the rest
 by begging: if any one of these should pretend that they can-
 not spin, the Answer is very near at hand, they may soon
 learn; since I set up this Employment, I have taught several
 persons of about sixty years of age, to Spin; who do constant-
 ly follow this Work, if they have no other; but if this answer
 will not do, the next should, which is this, if the Person can-
 not live of her Pension, and will not, being able, accept of
 such Employment as the Parish hath to give; let her get some
 other, by means of which, she may help to maintain her self,
 so that she be not found begging in the Streets, upon pain of
 losing that Relief which she received from the Parish; to
 prevent which, 'tis like she would fall to work, from which,
 and her Pension, she might make a good Shift to live: Or,
 otherwise let her person be secured as an Idle Beggar, in the
 House of Correction, where she should be made to work, or
 forbid to eat, as the Apostle St. Paul adviseth, saying, *If any
 will not work, neither let them eat.*

But further, to encourage the setting up of the Linnen Ma-
 nufacture for the Employment of the poor, I desire it may be
 considered, That there is no Commodity that I know of, that
 is of the like Value, that can be set up with less Stock or less
 Loss at first, three parts of four even of that Cloth which comes
 not to above two Shillings an Ell, will be paid for Labour to
 the Dresser of the Flax, and to the Spinner, and Weaver, and
 as they spin finer, the price will advance so much, that five
 parts of six shall go out upon that account. I my self have seen
 a Pound of Flax not worth above eighteen pence at most,
 spun to that Fineness, that the Pound of Thred hath been
 worth eight or ten Shillings; and from other Countries we
 daily receive Thred spun of Flax, not above three or four Shil-
 lings

lings a Pound, at the price of three or four Pound Sterling. Then as to the Loss by Children and Learners, it will not be near so much as in many other things. A Child may first be set upon spinning of Tow, which cost about two pence a pound, which though it be spun never so badly will serve for some kind of use or other, which in Wool would be good for nothing, which yet is many times the Price.

Moreover, I desire it may be considered, that in this Trade all sorts of Persons whether Young or Old, Male or Female, may find Employment; if of Years and able, they may beat Hemp, dress Flax, and make them ready for the Spinster, and when spun, may be employed in weaving it, and those of both Sexes that are not able, may be put to spinning, as it is usual in many Places.

Obj. The next Objection I have met with is this, what will you do with all the Yarn these poor People shall spin, if you turn it into Cloth, the Commodity is brought over so cheap, that you will never be able to sell it without much Loss.

Ans. I must confess, this Objection hath too much of Truth in it, wholly to be removed: The best Answer I can make to it at present, is this, That we had better lose something by the Labour of the Poor, than lose all, by letting them live in Sloth and Idleness: For, suppose you should give six pence for that which really is not worth five pence, here will five pence be gained to the Nation, tho' one penny should be lost to the Parish. But besides, let it be considered, that if this Person had not been employed, there would not less have been spent, but rather more; forasmuch as six pence that is got by Labour, doth many times go further than twelve pence given for doing nothing, all that time People are idle, they will be spending, if they have where withal; and if they have not, 'tis like they will be worse employed, and either beg or steal to supply their Wants.

All that I can further say to this Objection, is only this, That it is to be hoped in time, as our People grow more skilful and industrious, we may be able to sell as cheap as our Neighbours; but if we cannot, 'tis much better to lose something

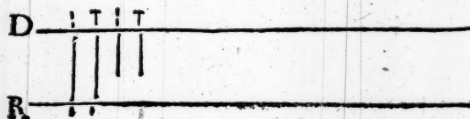
thing in a way that will make the poor People better, and the Nation richer, than to suffer them to live in Sloth and Idleness, to their utter ruine, and to the great Loss and Damage of the Kingdom.

Obj. But it may be some will object and say, Where will you find Persons that have Skill to manage this Employment, or whom shall the Parish trust with it? If it be left to every body's Care, it will come to nothing; forasmuch as commonly that is no body's, which is every body's Business: And if you leave it to the Care of one or two, the Parish may be cheated.

Ans. To this I answer, That it is not to be doubted, but that in every Parish some such honest and faithful Persons may be found, as would not wrong the Parish, nor imbezzle one farthing of their Stock, but account it their Honour to be employed in so noble and generous a Work, which would not only make a better Provision for the Poor, but make them better also.

But farther, I answer, that there needs not much Skill to manage this Affair, and that which is necessary will soon be learnt; this was one of the greatest Encouragements I had to fall upon the Linnen Manufacture, because there was so little of Difficulty in it, to what there is in some others. Every Merchant will tell you where you may buy Flax and Hemp at the best hand, and it will be as easie to find both Men and Women that shall dress them, who will give an Account how many Pound of every sort each hundred Weight makes, which you must enter into a Book for that purpose; when this is done, what you deliver of any sort to the Spinster, must likewise be entred with the name of the Person and Place where she dwells, which I have done by drawing two Lines after this manner, with the name of the person set above, upon

A. B. in C. D.



the first of which lines I make so many strokes as I deliver out pounds to the Spinster; for Tow, which

which is a cheaper sort, I make a little Dash on the Top of the Stroke ; when it is brought home, I make the Stroaks through both the Lines, as above, with a D. for deliver'd out, and an R. for received in again ; but in case you still deliver the same for Quantity and Quality that you receive in, you need not trouble your self in this Manner, but let the Account stand just as it did at first.

When the Yarn comes in, I lay every sort by it self, that is spun to a Fineness, and when I deliver any of it to the Weaver, I enter to his account the Quantity and Quality ; as for Instance, to A. B. in C. D. so many pound of Yarn, which cost such a price ; and when the Weaver brings home his Cloth, I weigh it again, by means of which, I can certainly tell you, at the making up of the Account, whether all my Flax and Hemp be brought home by the Spinner, and all my Yarn by the Weaver ; as also what my Cloth stands me in : By which I do prevent being deceived by others, and deceiving my self.

When I first began to employ the Poor in Spinning, the best direction that I could receive, was to pay for spinning the same price that the Flax and Hemp stood me in, or what those sorts were generally sold for ; but this I soon found to be a very unequal way : Forasmuch as some People would spin a much finer Thread than others, and better deserve 8 *d.* for spinning a pound of Flax that cost but six pence, than another four pence ; so that after a little time, I brought all the poor people to spin six hundred Yards for a penny, were the Thread finer or courser, which was three Knots or Lays about a half yard Reel, with one hundred Threads in a Lay, which makes just six hundred yards ; and since then, with much ado, finding the Loss to be great, I have brought them to fifty Yards more, which yet is much less than is spun in other places. In the Contract which the City of *Bristol* made with one Mr. *King*, and others, for the Employment of five hundred of their poor People in the way of Spinning : For the first Year, he was

obliged to pay them two pence half penny for sixteen hundred Yards of Yarn, which is much about the price that I pay the poor People here, because they being either wholly to learn, or much to seek, might not be discouraged; but after the first Year, by this Contract, he might alter the Price, provided he never brought them to spin above eight hundred Yards for a penny; and I doubt not, if our poor People could be brought to spin so much here, there would be no Loss by the Linnen we make, but rather Profit; but the Mischief of it is, our Poor People have not been brought up, either to work hard, or to fare hardly; and the Trade of Begging, being known to be so easie and gainful, they will much rather range about forty or fifty Parishes in a day, and get a penny in each Parish, than work hard in one to get six pence or eight pence; which they must do in this Employment: So that till the Magistrate will do his Duty, and see the Laws put in Execution against Beggars, or the People grow so wise, as not to encourage this wicked Course of Life, I have little hope to see this matter much amended.

Having given you an account of the price I pay for spinning, I shall now tell you what I pay for Flax and Hemp, (though this is sometimes more or less, as the Markets rise or fall) as also what I pay for dressing them, and for weaving the Cloth I make, because I would give the greatest Encouragment I could to the setting up this Manufacture, for the Employment of our poor People, till some other, or better way should be found out.

For *Riga* Hemp at this time, I pay twenty shillings a hundred, which is very low; for *Quinborough* about twenty two, which is cheap; for *Muscovia* Flax, about forty four a hundred; for *Quinborough* about forty shillings a hundred; for *Holladay* about thirty six; for *Pater-noster* Flax, about thirty: All which Prizes are very high to what they are at some times; for *English* Flax, about five pence half penny a pound undrest; which Prizes I rather insert, to give Buyers

Buyers a little Aim, than for a standing Rule. For beating of Hemp, I pay four Shillings and eight pence, a hundred Weight.

For dressing Hemp long or short, eleven pence a dozen pound, for dressing Flax I give three pence a Stone, accounting eight pound to the Stone.

For Weaving Cloth, I pay the several Prices following, for Yarn spun to six pence and seven pence a pound, for every Ell of Cloth half-ell wide, two pence half penny; for that which is three quarters wide, three pence; for that which is three quarters and half wide, three pence half penny; for that which is Yard wide, four pence; for that which is Ell wide five pence.

For Yarn spun to nine pence and ten pence a pound, I pay one half penny more for every half quarter of an Ell, rising as before; in that of seven pence and eight pence, and the like in that which is still finer; for coarse Cloth, Yard half quarter wide, I pay three pence an Ell, and for Sacking, about three pence a Yard.

Which prices I have here inserted, as I said before, rather to give some Aim, than to be a standing Rule; yet this I am sure, no one need to exceed them, but in some places they may be abated, according to the Cheapness of Living, over what it is in this City.

It is a thing greatly to be wished, that we could make Linnen Cloth here, as cheap as they send it us from abroad, but if that cannot be done, nor any other way found out to employ our poor People, we had much better lose something by the Labour of our poor, than loose all their Labour, and keep them into the Bargain, which must be done one way or other; for the Back and Belly have no Ears, Hunger will break through Stone Walls, and if some People cannot honestly, they will any way supply their Wants, though they are hanged for their Pains.

But Thanks be to God, there are still amongst us, an honest sort of poor people, that are content to take any pains for

for a Living, rather than beg or steal, and for their Sakes chiefly, I have set up this Employment, and do heartily wish it were better for their sakes, they being indeed the truest Objects of Charity that will do what they can to get a Living, and 'tis great Pity, that such poor Souls should not be helped: If by what they are able to do, they cannot procure to themselves Necessaries of this sort. You very seldom see any begging about the Streets, except upon some extraordinary Occasion or Accident, and then 'tis done with great Modesty, and as much against their Natures as any thing in the World, but starving.

But as for those common Beggars, and especially those profligate Wretches called the running Camp, which every day pester our Streets; they are a People that one would think came from the Suburbs of Hell it self, a Dishonour to humane Nature, a Shame to the Government, and an intolerable Trouble to all persons they come near, by their Swearing, Scolding, Fighting, &c. You may easily know them, as also by their numbers, for they commonly go in Companies, and will be present at all Solemnity, but more especially at Feasts and Funerals. Of late they are grown so impudent, that they will thrust themselves into Churches, and by their Brawling and Scolding, many times disturb the Minister; when Sermon is done, the Congregation must not pass out, but one by one, because they will make the most they can of it, by asking every person something, and what they get, they spend as wickedly as they get it: So that to relieve these Miscreants, is a greater Act of Folly (that I say no worse of it) than to throw a man's Money down the Thames, for hereby you give Encouragement to this wicked kind of Life: and would once People be perswaded to forbear this foolish Pity, they would be necessitated to work. I lately heard a Gentleman tell this Story, who was persued by a lusty Rogue in *Lincolns-inn-fields*, that refusing to give him any thing, cryed, Ah, Master if all were of your Mind, I know what I would do; upon the
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hearing of which, he turned back again, and said, why Sirrah, what would you do? Truly Master said he, I would fall to work : and I doubt not but the rest of his Brethren would do the like, but that they find Begging so beneficial a Trade.

It is not above six Months since, that a Gentleman of good Quality, that lives in the Country, told me, that having occasion to pass some of the Fields about the Town, he met with a young Fellow that askt him for an Alms, whom he no sooner lookt upon, but he well remembred him to have lived in the same Parish where he did, and asking him if he were not such a man, he told him he was, and presently called the Gentleman by his name; who asking him how long he had followed that Trade? told him, ever since his Wife died, which was about three years: in short, the Beggar askt him where he lay, and desired he might have leave to wait upon him at his Chamber, which he readily granted him; withal, wondring in himself, what he should have to say to him, but when he came, he soon acquainted him with his Business, which was to get him to put out 200. l. that he had gotten by his new Trade, to keep him as he said, when he was old; by which you see, that begging is a very gainful Trade. So that 'tis no wonder that so many fall upon it, and that all places, but especially this City and Suburbs are so filled with them, nor is there any Hopes to see them fewer, till the Laws are put in Execution both against them, and those that do relieve them. If any shall think that I am very uncharitable, because I would have all lusty Beggars made to work, or soundly whipt, and such as relieve them, punished as the Laws require, I am very confident that they do not consider upon what good Grounds such Laws were made, nor the great Evil such Relief doth both to the persons themselves, as well as to the Nation, nor yet the plain Injunction of the Apostle, who saith, *If any will not work, neither let them eat.*

Obj. But

Obj. But some will still object against the setting up the Linnen Manufacture, That the Commodity is more proper for other Countreys, because they have more plenty of Hemp and Flax; and also, that if we do not take off their Linnen, they will not take off our Woollen Cloth, which is the Staple Commodity of our Nation, and ought rather to be encouraged than any other.

Ans. To which I answer, First, that for Flax, our Country, at least some parts of it, is as proper as any other, and may with good Management, be made so for Hemp also.

A Worthy Person in *Surry*, having a mind to employ his poor Neighbours, and to prevent the great Mischiefs that Idleness had produced among them, as Begging, Stealing and breaking of Hedges, resolved to set up the Trade of Spinning Flax, and making of Cloth, which for some time he did, by supplying himself with Flax from *London*; but afterwards, he caused ten Acres of his own Land to be sown with Flax; and after a just Computation of his Charge, reckoning his neat Flax at one penny in a pound less than he paid for the same sort from *London* the Year before, made twenty shillings an Acre of his Ground, which would not have been let at four shillings.

But Secondly, Let it be considered, that some Countreys have fallen upon the making of Wollen Cloth; and others in a manner prohibited it, by laying so great a Charge upon it; so that it is in a manner absolutely necessary for us to fall upon the making of Linnen Cloth, to make up the Damage they have done us.

'Tis true, the Exchange of Commodities one Nation with another, is a very profitable way of Commerce, provided the Ballance of Trade be any thing equal; which it is well known hath not been with *France* for some Years of late: So that there is very great reason we should fall upon making such Cloth as we receive from thence, and that as great an Imposition should be laid upon their Linnen Cloth, as they have laid upon our Woollen: The Linnens imported

imported from *France* of late years, as saith *Britania Languens*, hath been estimated at five hundred thousand pounds: and so much as our Importations from *France*, exceed our Exportations thither: So much the Nation loseth, and is impoverished; and in the same Proportion *France* gains, which may be accounted a double Loss to *England*, not only in making us so much poorer, but also in making our most formidable Neighbour so much the richer, and consequently, so much the more able to do us harm: Therefore, so much Cloth as we make here, and would otherwise be brought us from *France*, to the same proportion our Nation saves, and *France* loseth; which is a double advantage to us.

I confess, it is very necessary, that the Woollen Manufacture should be kept up to the height, and a thousand pities that any of our Wooll should be carried out of *England* unwrought, especially at such a time as this, when the Commodity is so much advanced, and grown so scarce, that 'tis much to be feared, we shall not long have enough for those Hands that are already employed in it; so that instead of prohibiting the wearing of Silk, and Hair Stuffs for five months in a Year, when so many thousand Persons are employed in those Commodities: It is thought may prove very prejudicial; and that we had more need to encourage these Manufactures, or any other, to employ our Poor, than forbid them; neither indeed, will this be a way to lessen our Woollen Manufacture, but much more to encrease it: Forasmuch as any Person that wears Silk, or Hair that is brought from beyond Sea, in Exchange for our Woollen Cloth, may be truly said to wear twice as much, as he that has nothing but Woollen upon his Back.

I desire also, that it may be considered, that although it matters not how great a price is paid for what is worn of the Woollen Manufacture among our selves; yet if we shall not be able to send it abroad at a reasonable price, we shall put other Countreys upon seeking out other Com-

modities that will be cheaper, which may prove very mischievous.

There is no great danger, that ever our making of Linnen Cloth should do the Woollen much harm, unless we could make it cheaper than we have it from other places; and then if we furnished them with Linnen to as good advantage as Woollen, the matter would be much the same.

But lastly, I am not fond of one Employment for our Poor, more than for another, let but our idle People be employed, and the Trade of Begging suppressed, and I shall have attained my End: for this I am sure, is a far greater Evil to the Nation, and every way more mischievous than the setting them to make Linnen-Cloth, or any other thing would be. Nay, I am very confident, I conceive upon good grounds, that it were much better for the Nation to employ the poor to pick Straws, if there were no better Employment for them, than to let them live in Sloth and Idleness, because what they got by their Labours, would go much farther than so much given them for doing nothing: all the idle person hath to do, is to spend what you give him, which he will quickly do, when that is all his Business, but he that is employed hath something else to mind; neither will his Wants be so many, as the others, nor himself in half so much danger as the idle Person, whose Head is the Devils Anvil, where he forges all his Instruments of Death, and by being altogether at Leisure, may even be said to tempt the Devil himself to fall upon him, being ready for want of other or better Business, to do any thing, which either the Devil or his own wicked heart can suggest to him, or set him upon.

But there is one Objection more, which I have lately met with, which I cannot well pass over, and that is this?

Obj. Though it cannot be denied but that in the general, the Employment of the Poor is a very good Work, yet it may not be convenient to set up any Manufacture in this City for the doing of it, least by this means you drain the

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Countreys of all their poor People, and in time so fill the City and Suburbs with them, that all the Manufactures in *England* shall not be enough to employ them; and also, because by Experience it is found, that all those Places where there is any Manufacture set up, are much fuller of poor people than any other. And lastly, because it is not convenient, that the making and Consumption of any Commodity should be in one and the same place.

To which I answer, first, that if the Employment of the Poor be good in any place, it is so here, both because they are more in number in this City and Suburbs, than in any other Places, and because if they are here suffered to be idle, they will have more Temptations and Opportunities to do mischief, than they will have any where else.

As to what is objected, that by the setting up of any Manufacture here for the Employment of the Poor, you will drain the Countreys of all their poor People, and at last so fill the City and Suburbs with them, that all the Manufactures of *England* shall not be enough to supply them.

I answer, first, that there will need no more work to employ them in the City, than in the Country; so that if all the Manufactures in *England* will not employ them here, neither will they do it in the Country. But,

Secondly, I desire it may be considered, that where there is one person comes to this City to find Work, there is two comes to beg or to do worse: so that if due care were taken to employ all persons that were idle, and the Laws put in Execution against Beggars, a great many persons would soon leave the City, and return to their own Countries, where they might have near as much Money for their work, or at least more meat for their Money; and till this easie and gainful, though wicked Trade of Begging shall be suppress'd, I do not expect to see fewer, but more Beggars every day. It is well known, that of late years, many persons have come from the farthest parts of this Nation to set up this Trade here, and if speedy Care be not taken to prevent it,

this City and Suburbs will drain all the poor people of *England* unto them, Begging being here a better Trade than any where else, and greater Encouragement given to it.

As to that part of the Objection, which saith, that those Towns, where there is any Manufacture set up, are fuller of poor People than any other places, the Answer is easie.

First, Because those places have abundantly more People in them than any other, all Manufactures being carried on chiefly by the Poor, and not only by the Rich; so necessary are the Poor to the carrying on of any Manufacture, that the one would cease without the other.

But let it also be considered, that as in these Places, there are the poorest, so also here are the richest; and as there are in these places more poor People than in others, so also there are more rich People than in those places where there is no Manufacture, the Trade of such places being very little; Let any one compare the Trade of *Colchester* with the Trade of *Ipswich*, and he shall find, that where the Town of *Ipswich* gets one penny, the Town of *Colchester* gets twelve pence; and for every twelve pence returned in *Ipswich*, there is near twenty shillings returned in *Colchester*: Let the Poor of any place be never so many, provided they work and do not eat the Bread of Idleness, the place will be the richer for them, and the Trade far the better: For these People must eat, and drink, and wear Clothes, as well, tho' not so good, as those that are richer; and by these the Trade will be much increased, and the Inhabitants made much richer than otherwise they would be: A multitude of poor People well employed, would be like a multitude of Bees in a Hive, which would much sooner fill it with Honey than if they were fewer.

I would gladly know how our poor People shall be provided for, if Begging must not be allowed, nor Working encouraged, for fear of bringing more poor People among us. Put the case this were an Evil which yet I cannot allow,

low, must we not do good to our own Poor, for fear it should bring the Poor of other places among us. For my part, I am so far from thinking abundance of poor People an Evil, that if they were well employed, they would prove a Blessing to us : For in all Labour there is Profit, saith the Wiseman : 'tis only Idleness that makes the poor a Burthen both to themselves, and the Places where they inhabit.

But lastly, That all Pretences may be taken away from such as object against our Employment of the Poor among us, lest we should bring in the Poor of other Places: If the several Parishes do not like of this, they have Laws to keep them out; and they may thank themselves, that so many necessitous Persons do daily come in among them, because they do not prevent Inmates, but suffer any to settle among them, that may be chargeable, without giving Security to prevent it.

But it is further said in the Objection, that the Making and Consumption of any Commodity, should not be in one and the same place.

To which it is answered, that this part of the Objection, even by the Confession of all, hath no force in it as to many things; and why it should as to any, I see no reason: It was never doubted, but that good Beer and Ale, which some call our *English* Manufacture, may without any prejudice, be made and consumed in one and the same place; and why not any Commodity for the Back, if there be need of them, as well as those for the Belly? I do not understand: We use to say, Every man will Christen his own Child first: So much of any Commodity as is necessary, will be made use of in the place where it is made, and only the rest sent abroad.

Put the Case, for want of other Employment, the City of *London* should set their poor People upon making Linnen Cloth, and that in time they should be able to fit the Country with it, upon as good terms as they do twenty others.

others that are made in this City. Where would be the Prejudice, if in the first place they supplied themselves with what they have occasion for.

But as to the sort of Work, you will employ the poor People in, I am not concerned so much for that, as that you do employ them some way or other, and prevent that idle kind of Life, which many of them lead, which will bring them, not only to Beggary, but to all manner of Vice, as hath been already observed from what hath been said, I think it doth plainly appear, that the only way to prevent Poverty and Want among those that are well and able to work, is to bring them to Labour, and prevent Idleness, which being done, it will be much easier to provide for those that through Age, Sickness, or the like, are utterly incapable of doing any thing towards their own maintenance: And that this might effectually be done, care must be taken to put the Laws in Execution, which are made on that behalf, which I am told, hath strictly enjoyned every Parish, to take care, that such Persons, may have such an Allowance, as may be suitable and sufficient for their Wants, that so they need not be necessitated to beg, nor forced to go out of their own Parish to seek Relief: inso much, that if the Places where they live, be not able to give them a sufficient Supply to their Wants and Necessities, they ought to apply themselves to their next Neighbours for Help and Assistance; and in case they fail herein, 'tis their own Fault. And indeed, what can be more reasonable than such Laws as these? Forasmuch as there is nothing can tend more to the Dishonour of any Nation, than to see such poor, aged, sick and impotent People, necessitated to beg up and down the Streets, when God knows, many times they are fitter to be in Bed. That we do not force such as are able to work and get their own Livings, is a shame only to our Prudence, and want of good Government; but that we necessitate such Persons as those to beg, is a shame to our very Profession of Christianity, and shews that

that we are hard-hearted, and have no Bowels of Compassion to our poor Brethren. Surely this is not to give Honour to the Aged, nor to be Eyes to the Blind, and Feet to the lame, and Wisdom to them which have no Understanding, nor yet to do to others as we would that they should do unto us, if we were in such Circumstances. It many times falls out, that Persons who have lived well in their younger Years, and it may be wrought hard when they were able, that by reason of Sickneſs, or ſome ſad Accident, have come to Poverty in their Old Age.

How often hath it fallen out, that Widows, by truſting their Eſtates in the Hands of Knaves, have loſt all they had, and been brought to Want? having out-lived all their Friends and near Relations, and nothing to help them, but the Kindneſs of the Pariſh, and if that fail, how miſerable muſt they be?

Now for the Prevention of which, I would propoſe one or two things more.

Fiſt, That in every great Pariſh, there might be ſome other perſons appointed beſides the Church-wardens, who ſhould be men of the beſt Reputation, both for Honesty and Eſtates, to whom I would have given that honourable Title of being called Fathers for the Poor, as it is now in the *French* and *Dutch* Churches, whoſe chief work and Buſineſs it ſhould be, to viſit ſuch poor People, and to inſpect their Wants, and to have ſome part at leaſt of the Pariſh ſtock, committed to them for the Supply of them whereas now alas, the poor people muſt themſelves apply to the Church-wardens if they are able to crawl abroad, otherwiſe, if their own Neighbours, which many times are poor enough themſelves, are not the kinder, they may periſh in their own Houſes for want of Food, Phyſick, Fire or Cloaths, as I have great reaſon to believe many hundreds have done of late years, I pray God lay it not to our Charge, that in a Nation ſo abounding with Riches and Plenty as *England* doth, any perſon ſhould periſh through want. It is well known.

well known, that the Church-Wardens of most Parishes, come not to those places, because they are better or richer men than others, but because of their long Standing in the Parish; and many times, God knows, they are no more affected with the Wants and Necessities of a poor Creature, than a Grave-maker at the sight of a dead Corps.

Secondly, I propose that some such Houses may be erected here as are in *Holland*, for the Reception of aged persons, to which they may resort, and be admitted as soon as they find themselves in a declining Condition, before all is spent or lost, paying for their Admittance according to their Age, and the Quality of such Houses as they should desire to go into; for of these, I would have several sorts. This in a few years would prevent much of that Poverty and Necessity, that oftentimes fall upon old Age; as to give an Instance or two, suppose that a Woman buries her Husband, who leaves her in Goods and Money to the value of one or two hundred pounds, but altogether unable to manage the Trade her Husband followed or any other, what can this poor Woman do, to live upon the Interest of this Money, though she knew never so well, how to secure it, she cannot; and if she lives upon the Principal, it will soon be gone. In such a case, what more advisable, than that this Person forthwith go and purchase for her self a Being in one of these Houses, where she shall be well provided for, as long as she live, and be delivered from the fear of Want in her old Age, which many times is more grievous than the fear of Death it self?

How often have it saln out, that Widows who were left well by their Husbands, for Want of Understanding to manage their Estates, or by trusting it in insolvent hands, have lost all, and brought themselves to Poverty; or suppose as many times it hapneth, that while a Man and his Wife live, their Trade should either grow out of Fashion, or so bad, that it was not possible for them either to get a Living by it, or to fall into any other. In this case, would it not be
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much for the Advantage of both these Persons, while something was left, to go and make Provision for themselves in one of these Houses where they should be comfortably provided for as long as they lived, and the longer Liver of them.

I doubt not, but there are many persons that have known the Cases now put often to happen, and many others of the like nature; this would be a sort of Charity, if I may call it Charity, very advantageous to the Persons that should partake of it, and as it may fall out, very profitable to the Setter of it up, but however, without Loss, and would really be a far greater piece of Service done to the Nation, than are for the most part our Alms Houses, which though never so well intended, are in some Respects prejudicial, drawing poor People to settle in such places where they are erected, and a means to make some People careless in laying up any thing against old Age, in hopes of being there provided for; not that I would wholly discourage this way of Charity: In some Respects it may be good, but yet I will say, that this is no way inferiour to it, in as much, as many times it would effectually prevent that Poverty which often falls upon Old Age, which is doubtless as great an Act of Charity, as to relieve Persons in Necessity. I am verily perswaded, if one such Building as this I am now speaking of, was erected, for the Reception of Aged Men, or Women, or both, and well endowed for the performance of such Conditions as should be made, there would be no want of Persons to go into it; and that in a short time, so many would be erected, that the next Generation should not see one quarter so many of poor aged People, exposed to Beggary as in this. There are some persons that I know, who have poor Relations, that would willingly be at one or 200 *l.* Charge, to see them thus provided for. I wish that all that were able, were so well minded; but on the contrary, to their shame be it spoken, I know some that have so little Charity for their poor Relation, that though they are able, yet suffer them to want; nay, to beg. I hope the number

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of such unnatural Wretches are not many, yet some such there are, who provide not for their own Kindred, of whom the Apostle saith, That they have denied the Faith, and are worse than Infidels.

But now Sir, that I may give you an account of the Work-house in *Aldersgate* Parish, and the management of Affairs there (which was the thing you desired, and what first I chiefly intended) by which I hope there will appear a very likely way to prevent much Poverty for the Future, and Beggary for the Present.

The House being finished, I acquainted the Parish, that if they had any poor People that wanted Employment, if they went thither, I would supply them, upon these Conditions, *viz.* that they should not take away their Pensions from any that I employed, nor give Pensions to any but such as would, being able, follow that Work I had to give them, or some other, by means of which, and the Pension received from the Parish, they might provide for themselves without Begging: For I have long observed, that a great many of those Persons we find begging up and down the Streets, are such as do receive some Pension from the Parishes where they live: but that being too small to maintain them, they make up the rest by Begging, which might easily be prevented in every Parish, as it was in this we are now speaking of, there being here no Person that had a Pension, and was able to work, but was supplied therewith, and with these together, were unable to make good Provision for themselves, and to live much more happily than before: And if at any time any of these Persons should be found begging in the Streets, the Parish promised to take away their Pensions, and I promised to take away their Work, and leave them to provide for themselves as well as they could, which must be by begging or stealing; but wherever they begged, it should not be in this Parish, at least, not with any good Success: For the Parish having called over all their poor People, and appointed work for those that were able, thought it convenient to give a Badge, with the

the three first Letters of the Parishes name upon it, to such, and only such as they found incapable of any Labour ; by means of which , they were permitted to go into the Parish, if they were able, or else to send some in their names at such an hour of the day, to receive such broken Bread and Meat as their Neighbours had to give, who also promised to give it unto these, and no others: for by this Badge, which was made of blew and yellow Bays, pinned upon their sleeve or breast, they were known to the Inhabitants to be those very persons, whom the Deputy, Common-counsel-men, and Church-wardens had judged fit to receive such Charity. And I know not why any body should be offended that the Parishoners should invite their poor Neighbours once a day to come to their houses to receive such Bread and Meat as they were willing to give them, neither would I have these poor people go under so dishonourable a name as Beggars, but to be lookt upon as invited Guests.

And would their rich Neighbours now and then invite them to their Tables, it would take away this Reproach, and be an Obligation upon their Servants, to take care that what they gave them at other times, were decently set by for them, and not scambled up and down as in some places I have seen it done as if it were to be given to Dogs, rather than Christians ; this were indeed to follow the Advice of our blessed Lord and Saviour, who saith, *Luke 14. 13. When thou makest a Feast, call the Poor, the Maimed, the Lame, and the Blind, for they cannot recompence thee, but thou shalt be recompenced at the Resurrection of the Just.*

And this course of giving a Badg to your own Poor Neighbours, by which they might be known, and resolving to relieve no others, unless there were not enough of these ; in which case, some from other Parishes might be allowed to come in like manner, tho at first sight it may seem to have little in it, yet if duely practiced would be found of very great moment, and productive of many goods effects ; insomuch, that it is impossible it should fail, unless the Parish fail in their promise.

For first of all, by this means, you will in a short time clear your Parish of all those idle Beggars that daily infest it, to the great trouble of all House-keepers, whose doors are seldom quiet from one or other of them, to the great Disturbance of the whole Family, it being in some places almost onebodys work to give them answers.

Then this will tend to the quiet of all Passengers that shall have occasion to go through your Parish, who are wont to be haunted with those evil Spirits, from one end of the street to the other; and if by accident they meet with any one by the way, with whom they have occasion to speak, and shall make the least halt, they must in their own defence, give them something to be gone, or else they will hear all they say, or by their begging, hinder them from saying any thing; this is a thing so well known to all that live in or frequent the City, that I need not say more concerning it. Now by means of a Badge, the Parish will know whom they relieve, and when it shall come to be known that they have resolved to relieve at their doors, no other but their own poor Neighbours as it will in a short time; the common Beggars will know better how to employ their time, than in visiting such places, where nothing is to be got.

And while this Parish of *Aldersgate* took the course prescribed them, I my self have taken a Friend, and gone through the chief places of this Parish, and have not found one Beggar in it; I must confess, of late they have been something remiss in the Prosecution of the Methods agreed upon, but I doubt not they will fall upon it again. (For I hear, instead of Badges made of Bays, they have made some of Brass, and resolve to give the poor aged and impotent People, new-coats, all made of gray Cloth, to put them upon, that so the Parish may the better know their own poor People, that are appointed to take such Relief as they have to give at their doors;) and then I am sure, what I now tell you was done, will be done again.

Obj. But here it will be objected, That some Parishes are so full of poor People, who are not able to work, that they

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are not able to relieve one quarter of them in this kind.

Ans. To which I answer, That there are several Parishes and some Wardswithin the City of *London*, which have very few or no poor People in them, wherefore I humbly propose, that by the Allowance of the Lord Mayor, &c. it may be permitted to those poor Parishes, to send daily some of their poorest People for Relief.

As for Example, Suppose the Parish of *Algate* which is very full of poor people, should be permitted to send such a number of them into the Ward of *Langbourn*, with a Badge of the Parish, by which they might be known, at such an hour of the day, to receive what Bread and Meat they had to give, and this Ward desired by the Alderman, Deputy, or Common-counsel-man of every Precinct to give their broken Victuals only to these persons: this in a short time would have the like Effect in this Ward as it had in the parish aforesaid; yet least it should be found troublesome to the Ward, that these poor people should be ranging about it from one end to another, it might with ease be ordered, that every Precinct should have such a number allotted, according to it's Bigness or Smallness, to receive their Fragments; by which means, the Ward should be more quiet, and the Streets rid of those multitude of Beggars which are every day found in them, to the great trouble of the People, and the Dishonour of the Government, as hath been said.

And till some such Course as this was taken, I would advise every Family that have broken Bread and Meat to bestow, that they would not throw it away upon those common Beggars that come to their doors every day, who many times are too fine mouthed to eat any of it themselves, unless a choice Bit now and then, and either throw away the rest, or sell it unto others; but rather to invite two or three poor Families to come for it at such times as you should appoint, which would be a great Comfort to them. This is the way which I have taken for many years last past, so that now my door is seldom troubled by common Beggars on this account.

From what hath been said, I suppose it will appear very practica-

practicable to bring all the Parishes in *England* into such a Method, that no poor Body should want Work, or be permitted to beg otherwise than by the allowance of the Parish, which yet I would not have called by this Term: For what hath been done in one Parish, may be done in every one, if the Circumstances are the same.

But 'tis like some will still object and say, that this of *Aldersgate* Parish, is a rich Parish, and the Poor very few in it to what there are in others; so that what is related, may with greater ease be effected here, than where the Poor are more numerous.

Ans. To this, I say, it is very true, there are several Rich Men in this Parish, and the Poor of this Parish, tho' many, are not yet so many as in some others; yet even here there are many poor People and their Children that do spin Flax and Hemp, tho' they are not all Pensioners to the Parish, nor I hope ever will be, it being my design to prevent that as much as I can. But over and besides those of this Parish, there are above 1500 more out of other Parishes in and about the City of *London*, some of which do constantly follow this Employment, and others only when they have no better. As suppose a poor Woman that goeth three days in a week to wash or Scour abroad, or one that is employ'd in Nurse-keeping three or four months in a year, or a poor Market-woman, that attends three or four Mornings in a Week, with her Basket, and all the rest of the time these folks have little or nothing else to do; but by means of this Spinning, are not only kept within doors (some of which would otherwise be begging in the Streets) but made much more happy and chearful, being by their own Labours able to make Provision for themselves.

And were the Rich of this Parish fewer than they be, and the Poor many more than they are, the same course might be taken, and would prove effectual to the Ends before express'd: And by how much greater the number of the poor People are, by so much the more need to find them

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Employment, it being much more easie to provide them Work, than to keep them in Idleness ; and much more for their advantage, to be put into a way to get their own Bread, than to give it them for nothing : If with their Pension, you find them Employment, 'tis like that 6 *d.* will go further, and do them more good than 3 *s.* nothing being more mischievous to the Poor, than to live in Sloth and Idleness, as hath been said.

But further, to encourage the setting up of Schools in every great Parish, for the Instruction of young Children, and bringing them to labour ; and also for providing Work for such as are of Age, which they may carry to their own Habitations : I have a few things more to say.

First, By means hereof, you will prevent much of that mischief that happens to young Children, by suffering them to wander up and down without any Care or Government, by reason of which, they do not only get a lazy, idle Habit, which yet is no small Evil, but learn all manner of Wickedness that they are capable of, as Lying, Swearing, Thieving, and such like, which by sad experience, we find many times they retain as long as they live, being bred in the Bone, will hardly be got out of the Flesh, it being almost as possible to wash the *Blackamore* white, as it is to teach them to do well, that have been long accustomed to do evil : Whereas, if due Care were taken to instruct young Children, and to put them into a good Course of Life, before Evil had taken hold of them, both Labour and Vertue would be much more pleasing to them, than Idleness, Sloth and Vice.

Then by providing Work for such of your poor People as are able, and may want it. By this means, you shall in the first place, most certainly, make Provision for all the honest and industrious Poor in your Parish, who will, with great Joy and Thankfulness, be employed in any honest way to get a penny, Idleness being to them the greatest Burthen in the World, insomuch, that several persons have told me, they have taken as much pleasure in earning a penny, as they have

have in using it, their minds being all that time quiet in which they have been employed, and the day seem'd shorter, and pass'd away much more pleasantly than otherwise it would have done, no part of it being a Burthen to them; and had you seen as I have done many a time, with what Joy and Satisfaction many poor people have brought home their Work, and received their Money for it, you would think no Charity in the World, like to this of finding them Employment. Do not think that all the poor people in *England* are like those idle Vagrants you find up and down the streets, no, there are many thousands whose Necessities are very great, and yet they do what they can by their honest Labour to help themselves, and many times they would do more than they do; but for want of Employment, several that I have now working, to me, do spin some fourteen, and some sixteen hours in four and twenty, and had much rather do it, than be idle.

Here, if it were to the purpose, I could tell you many sad stories of the great wants and necessities of several poor people, that I have been an Eye-witness of, that would melt the most rocky heart into Compassion; the poorest people are many times those that come least in sight, who fare hard, and work hard to get bread.

Some Trades are grown so bad, and several Commodities fall'n so low in their price, that some who could with ease have earned 2 s. or 2. s. 6. d. in a day, can now hardly earn 12 d. by reason of which you have men run away from their Wives and Children, leaving them to the Parish; and sometimes, run distracted, or make away with themselves, Instances of all which cases, I have known too many.

To whom should Charity be extended rather than to such poor people, who are willing to take any pains for their Living, and yet are wholly idle many times, for want of work; but by this means of providing work for all persons that want Employment, it will be much more easie for the honest and laborious poor to find Relief.

Secondly, By this means you will leave all idle persons so much without Excuse, that they will not deserve your pity, whatsoever their Wants and Necessities are, they must thank themselves, who will not make use of such a means, as is put into their own Power; for if this Course was taken in all Parishes to imploy all that were able, and did want work, then when you saw a lusty person begging in the streets, you might say, go to your Parish, and work for your Living: but unless this be done, and you are sure that this person may have Employment, to bid him go work for his Living, is no better than to say to a Brother or Sister that is naked, and destitute of daily Food, go be warmed and filled, but give them not those things that are needful for the Body.

I pray God lay it not to the Charge of this City and Suburbs, that so little Care hath been taken in this respect, for this is one of those things to which it is chiefly owing, that our prisons are so full of Fellons and Debtors, of which it is thought, no Age hath produced the like; for tho I know one man that within a few years last past, with the Charity of some worthy persons hath delivered many hundred poor people out of Prison, that lay there either for their Fees or very small Debts; and I have reason to believe that many more hath been delivered by others, yet let any one but go to the Marshalsey, or the prison of *White Chappel*, or to the two Compters of *London*, and he shall find them very full of Prisoners at this time.

It was hoped that the City of *London* would have provided a Stock, and appointed a place to which poor persons might have brought their Pawns, and have been supplied with Money upon any Extremity, which would have been no loss to the City, and much to the Advantage of the poor, who now are fain to go to such Brokers as will not lend twenty Shillings a Week under six pence, which comes to 26 s. a year, by which Trade they make above two of one in a years time, to the Ruine of many poor people; neither is this the worst of it, but for every 20 Shillings they borrow, they must leave many times, above 40. s. worth of

Goods, which they must fetch away in such a time, which being never so little elapsed, the Goods are no more to be heard of.

Neither are many of our Tally-men much better, who trust poor Persons with twenty shillings worth of Goods, or rather with twelve or fourteen shillings worth, instead of twenty, to pay them by 6 *d.* or 12 *d.* a week, wherein, if they fail to pay, they hurry them into a Prison, with great Charge for Arrests and Proceedings at Law, which many times exceed the first Debt (which we hope will be in a great measure prevented, by setting up a Court of Conscience in the City of *Westminster*, and Borough of *Southwark*, as it is at present in the City of *London*) at which Prison, they are sure to lie, till Charity comes thither for the Release of poor Prisoners, which they very well know will come at certain times of the Year; and then, if you meet with a kind Jaylor, or a Creditor of any Compassion, 'tis like you may get out your Prisoner with some small Abatement, otherwise not; so that in effect, most of those Moneys that are carried to Prisons, run either into the Bailiffs, or the Jaylors, or into the Pawn-brokers, or Tally-mens Pockets.

This I instance, not to hinder people from delivering persons out of Prison (I wish there were many more so well minded), but to provoke them to do all they can to keep them from coming thither: It being twice as great an Act of Charity, and much more for the benefit of any person, to keep him from falling and breaking his Head, than to take him up and give him a Plaister: So to keep a poor man from going to Prison, is much greater Charity than to help him out; and I heartily wish, that this sort of Charity were more in practice, both here and in other Countreys, where they tell you of prodigious Numbers that are every Year brought to their Hospitals and Charitable Houses, when it is much to be feared, little Care is taken to prevent that Poverty, Misery and Necessity that falls upon them; but is rather occasioned from the badness of some Laws, or from the want of good ones.

Methinks it were greatly to be wished, that care were taken to provide work for all our poor Debtors and Felons, that being cast into Prison, could not there keep themselves without the Charity of such places. Nay, for our Felons, I see no reason but they should be made to labour, though they could otherwise provide for themselves: This would be a good means to prevent much of that Wickedness which is practiced in those places.

It seems to me very unreasonable, that Prisons should be places of pleasure, delight and choice; yet some such there are, into which, several persons of good Estates, but very bad Consciences, remove themselves on purpose to cheat their Creditors, and to spend their own, and other mens Moneys in Sloth and Luxury, whilst their poor Creditors are fain to fare hardly, and many times to live in Sorrow and Want. As these therefore should be wholly suppress'd on the one hand, so also those little Prisons about the Town, which in some respects I may call little, because the Houses are not big, by reason of which, 20 or 30 shall be cast into one room, and that none of the biggest, and also because the Actions are not great for which persons are sent thither, tho' it may be, some of them have more Commitments and Discharges in a Year, than *Newgate* it self. Into some of these Prisons I have known several persons cast for a debt of ten Groats, and sometimes for less, where, if the person continue but a Night, his Fees shall be 13 s. 6 d. to the Keeper and his company, besides 1 s. 6 d. Garnish-money, 3 s. for the Writ, and 5 s. for the Arrest, with some other Charges. It is not very long since I had one of these Jaylors before the Judges, for taking unlawful Fees, and other Exorbitant Practices; but before any thing was determined in the Matter, the person made a Rope, and hanged himself. It is a most lamentable thing, that these little Prisons are not suppress'd, or at least regulated, and a Table of Fees set up, both in them, and all the Prisons of *England*, that so all the poor people may know what they have to pay, and not be left to the mercy of a cruel Jaylor, who rather than he will abate any thing of his

his Demands, will keep a poor Wretch in Prison till he is almost starved there, and his Wife and Children quite starved at home. I do not lay this Charge against them all, some I have known to be more compassionate, yet such I have known also, that upon the least Displeasure taken against a poor Prisoner, have threatned to make Dice of his Bones, before he would abate him a penny, and no doubt he would have been as good as his word. 'Tis in these places that they eat up the poor of the Land, as a man would eat Bread; neither are the Jaylers themselves sometimes more cruel, than the poor people are one unto another, insomuch, that I have greatly wondred to see how violently they will prosecute one another, it being most certainly true, which *Solomon* hath observed, *That when the Poor oppresseth the Poor, it is like a sweeping Rain, that leaveth nothing behind it*; much of which Cruelty also would be prevented by setting up a Court of Conscience in the out-parts of this City, as it is already in *London*, to which all persons should apply themselves for any Debt under 40 s. with very little Charge to themselves; by reason of which, the Creditor would be much more like to get his Debt, and the Debtor better able to pay him, than when five times the value of the Debt shall be run out in Charges of a Suit, as many times I have known it, to the utter ruine of the Debtor, and loss of the Creditor's Money.

And as for those Night-walkers, and other idle and vitious persons, that are sent to *Bridewel*, and other Houses of Correction, it would be of great use, that there were some Law to confine them to such places for a certain time, according to the nature of their Offences, where they might be taught to work, and made able to get their own Livings, both while they were there, and when they came out, as it is in *Holland* and other places; whereas, for want of such a Law, these kind of people are no sooner put into prison, but they are bailed out again, and if they do receive the Correction of the house before they are discharged, it signifies very little, neither can it reasonably be thought, but that they will follow their old Trade again, for want of a better; whereas 'tis very probable, if they were taught a more honest

nest way to get a Living, they might leave off that wicked course of Life, which they had followed, and betake themselves to that Employment they had learnt in Prison, or if they did not, if ever they came in again, it might be for a much longer time, which would make them at Leisure to repent their Folly, and careful to avoid the like again, especially, if they were suffered to eat no more than they earned, and to do as much work for 2 *d.* in the Prison, as they might have three pence for if they were out, which would also help to bear the Charge of such places, which as I am informed, is the way taken beyond Sea, with great Advantage to the persons themselves, who are hereby brought to Sobriety, and also to such Houses. I have heard the worthy President and some of the Governours of *Bridewel*, complain of the want of such a Law, having observed, that of the vast numbers that have been sent thither, of which many have been corrected, yet few in comparison, have been amended, but as they have been soon discharged the House, so they have soon been brought thither again, without any Alteration, except for the worse. And how indeed can it otherwise be expected, these people having been brought up to nothing of Labour when they were at Liberty, nor taught nothing when they were under Confinement, by which they might provide for themselves, will do it either by the old way they formerly took, or some other as bad, rather than starve.

I humbly propose therefore, that the Women and young people might be taught to spin well upon the double Wheel, or to weave Lace, or the like, and that the men might be taught to beat Hemp, dress Flax, or comb Wool, or else to weave Linnen-cloth, &c. and to be taught these so well, that they might find Employment in some of these ways, when they came out of Prison, which 'tis like, many would rather take unto, than run the hazzard of such another Confinement, or by taking such a Course as would bring them to the Gallows. I my self have found some people very hardly, brought to any Employment at first, that by fair means have fall'n to it, and the lazy Habit being got off, have been more pleased

pleased with it than to live in Idleness, and have so continued for some years. When this is effected, the person is in a manner out of danger: For I dare say, there hath been more lost through Idleness, than any other Vice whatsoever; when people have no Work to do, or Employment to follow, their first Attempt is to run into Debt of such as will be so mad to trust them, which not being able to pay, they are run into Prison, from whence, if they get out by the Charity of others, their next Trade is Begging, or it may be Stealing, for which they come to be hanged.

I therefore would advise all persons who are so charitable as to release poor persons out of Prison, to take especial care of those who have a Trade to follow, and a House to go unto when they went out; otherwise 'tis very like the Person is better where he is, and in less danger of doing Mischief, either to himself or others: For, for want of these, the person being out, of Prison, must either fall to begging, or that which is still worse, stealing, or cutting of Purses; insomuch, that I have sometimes known, and heard often of persons that have been taken out of one Prison for Debt, and in a short time thrown into another for Felony. But that I may return to the Business I was upon, to encourage the providing of work for the Poor, by means of which they may be better able to provide Necessaries for themselves.

By so doing, all that have any Bowels of Compassion, will find themselves greatly eased in their minds, and their Enjoyments of the good things of this World, more sweet and pleasant to them, when they are not embittered with the sad thoughts of the Wants and Necessities of their poor Neighbours, who otherwise will have no way to relieve themselves, but wretched Begging, or wicked Stealing.

Besides that, they will be more secure in the Enjoyment of their Goods, by how much there will be fewer persons that will have the temptation of extreme want to make them steal, and be injurious unto others in their Possessions.

And lastly, to leave many things unsaid, all good Christians, who are serious in the Profession of Religion, and hope
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of Eternal Life, must needs rejoyce to have a hand in such a work as this; because nothing can more confirm our hope of having our portion among those to whom our Lord Jesus will at the great day of Accounts say, *Come ye Blessed of my Father, &c.* then this, that we have relieved the hungry, thirsty, naked and imprisoned, or have been a means to preserve those that otherwise would have fallen into those Miseries and Calamities.

POSTSCRIPT.

THus Sir, in compliance with your desire, and the desires of several other Friends, I have exposed my private thoughts to publick View and Censure, not doubting, but all well-minded and ingenuous persons will accept of my good will, tho they may not be satisfied with my reasons, nor yet in the management of the Undertaking, which now for full five years hath been carried on with some difficulty, and very great pains, as any one must imagine.

This I am sure is the worst that can be said of it, That it hath not yet been brought to bear its own Charges. The reason of which, I have already given in part: however this doth greatly satisfy me, that every penny that hath been lost by it, either by my self, or those friends that have helpt to bear it, hath been many times gained to the Poor, and to the Publick; neither hath the loss been so great, as to fright any man that is able and hath a good mind, from undertaking the like: For in above 4000*l.* laid out the last year, in the management of the whole Affair, reckoning House-rent, Servants Wages, loss by Learners, with the Interest of the Money employed in the Concern, there was not above 200*l.* lost, one chief reason of which I must attribute to the kindness of several persons that took off some of the Commodities I made at the price they cost me; and in particular, to the East India and Guinea Company, who gave me encouragement to make their Allabas Cloths and coarse Canvas for their Pepper-Bags, which in former times they use to have from other Countreys.

'Tis most certain, that unless a higher Impost be laid upon foreign Linnen, it will not be possible for us at present, to make it so cheap

cheap as it is brought over, for our poor people will neither work so hard, nor can live so cheap as generally the poor people of other places do; therefore we must be content to lose something in this way, or find some other to employ our poor people in, for employed they must be, as we tender the good of their Souls or Bodies; and I am of Opinion, notwithstanding all that I have yet heard or read to the contrary, that the setting up the Linnen Manufacture would many ways be of great Advantage to this Nation, although to provide against the worst, I have made a good Progress in the Woollen Manufacture also, insomuch, that had not the price of Wool so greatly advanced of late, I doubt not but by this time to have made one of one; but of this I shall give no further account at present.

All that I have more to say, is to request such persons as have any Kindness for my Undertaking, to assist me therein, by taking off my hands some of the Cloth the poor people shall make, at the Price it stands me in, tho it be a little dearer than they might have Cloth elsewhere; I have met with some persons so charitable, that not having occasion for any for their own Use, have bought good quantities to give away to the poor, who have been as thankful for it as for Money, there being many thousands that have not above one Skirt to their Backs, and many that have none, insomuch, that within less than two years, I have given away to Men, Women, and Children, above 3000, whose Bodies have been greatly refreshed by them; and I doubt not but many of them have blest God for them, and pray'd for their Benefactors.

I have heard many people say, they would be ready to help such as are industrious: here are Objects to their own Hearts desire, that do all they can, but cannot do enough to keep themselves from want, insomuch, that had I not been enabled to give many of them money as well as work, when either they or their Children have fall'n sick, they might have perished through Want.

If any shall desire thus to shew their Charity to the poor, either by buying the Cloth they make, or otherwise, what they shall freely contribute to their Help and Relief, shall be faithfully given to them by theirs, and the Poor's Servant,

Tho. Firmin,